

# **National Shoreline Management Study**

*Dr. Robert W. Brumbaugh  
Planning and Policy Studies Division  
Institute for Water Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Alexandria, VA*

## **Introduction**

The Corps has received \$300,000 in FY02 to initiate the National Shoreline Management Study (NSMS) in response to Section 215(c) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999. This provision authorizes preparation of a report to Congress on the state of the shores of the United States. A copy of the legislative provision is included at the end of this paper. The initiative presents the opportunity to comprehensively examine the status of the Nation's shoreline for the first time in 30 years in order to provide a basis for future Administration and Congressional decisions and actions regarding shoreline management. The study will examine the extent and causes of shoreline erosion and accretion and discuss the economic and environmental affects of these processes. The study will describe the current Federal, state and local programs involvement in shore restoration and renourishment and other programs related to coastal management, which have evolved in recent decades. The study will provide analytical information useful in developing recommendations on levels of Federal and non-Federal participation in shore protection, as well as system approaches to sand management and coastal management decisions. The Coastal States Organization, the American Coastal Coalition, and the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association have expressed support for the legislation and funding for the study, and these groups have a keen interest in participating in the study. Several Federal agencies have also expressed support for the study and interest in participating in the study.

The Administration budget calls for \$500,000 in FY03 with an additional \$6,200,000 to complete the study after FY03.

## **Background**

The National Shoreline Study (1971), conducted by the Corps, was the first attempt by the Federal government to compile an analysis of the Nation's shoreline and to develop shore protection management guidelines. The report described shoreline conditions, analysis of erosion processes, and ways to mitigate erosion. Since then, development along the Nation's coastlines has increased extensively and is expected to continue at a rapid rate.

Federal programs and policies affecting shoreline development and protection have evolved independently without unifying objectives or principles. State and local programs have also become more numerous and have changed, and there is a lack of understanding of how Federal, state and local responsibilities interrelate. There is no framework to resolve cross-programmatic conflicts, promote

collaboration and synergy, or to promote regional and system-based planning. As with floodplain management and river basin planning, there is increasing recognition that coastal regions require a more comprehensive approach to planning for and responding to shoreline change and addressing the competing demands on coastal resources.

The NSMS is envisioned as a means to update and develop information needed for developing policies and programs, and making decisions related to shore protection and coastal management. This information will be developed with a national view utilizing regional examinations of issues and opportunities.

### **Approach**

First year funding will be used to scope the study. As part of the study scoping, the Corps Institute for Water Resources will update recent Corps studies regarding shore protection expenditures, examine development patterns in critical erosion shorelines identified in the 1971 National Shoreline Study, and identify areas of needed economic research and economic analysis methods to be used to conduct the study.

Prior to study initiation, preliminary coordination meetings were held with the USGS, NOAA and contacts in several other agencies, and the Coastal States Organization. Official coordination will be initiated the Federal partners in the future.

During scoping, the Corps will consider potential roles and contributions of the various agency stakeholders. Considerable amounts of data and information are available from within the Corps as well as from other Federal and state agencies, and data from these sources will be used in the study.

Inherent in the provision to examine a systems approach to sand management will be not only inter-agency, but also Corps intra-agency considerations. This study will explore taking more comprehensive and integrative views of projects and activities associated with navigation channel maintenance and development (including dredged material management planning), shore protection studies and projects, coastal ecosystem restoration studies and projects, planning assistance to states and regulatory decisions.

The NSMS will coordinate with two other Corps coastal initiatives--the Regional Sediment Management Demonstration and the National Shoreline Erosion Control Development and Demonstration Programs.

### **Section 215(c) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999**

*(c) REPORT ON SHORES OF THE UNITED STATES.—*

*(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall report to Congress on the state of the shores of the United States.*

*(2) CONTENTS.—The report shall include—*

*(A) a description of—*

*(i) the extent of, and economic and environmental effects caused by, erosion and accretion along the shores of the United States; and*

*(ii) the causes of such erosion and accretion;*

*(B) a description of resources committed by Federal, State, and local governments to restore and renourish shores;*

*(C) a description of the systematic movement of sand along the shores of the United States; and*

*(D) recommendations regarding—*

*(i) appropriate levels of Federal and non-Federal participation in shore protection; and*

*(ii) use of a systems approach to sand management.*

*(3) USE OF SPECIFIC LOCATION DATA.—In developing the report, the Secretary shall use data from specific locations on the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, Great Lakes, and Gulf of Mexico.*